

Colorado Springs
doesn't tolerate



is celebrated here.

We've been there.

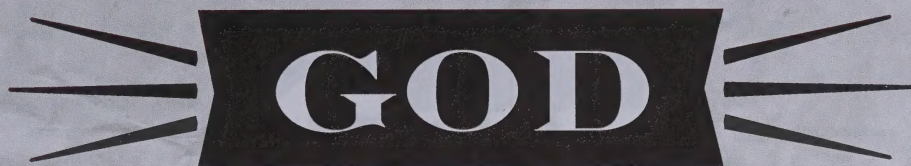


Citizens Project

We'll be there.

citizensproject.org

One nation under



doesn't belong
in government.

We've been there.



Citizens Project

We'll be there.

citizensproject.org

Colorado Springs
doesn't like



are welcome
here.

We've been there.



Citizens Project

We'll be there.

citizensproject.org



[Archives](#) | [RSS](#)

[« Palmer High School to host 'Unity F...'](#) | [Recent series from KRCC shows burni...](#)

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2013

NONPROFITS Citizens Project unveils controversial ad campaign

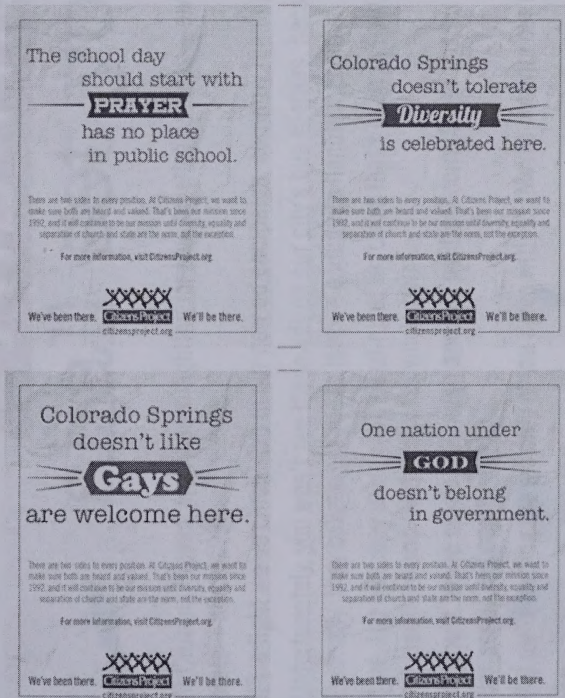
POSTED BY [J. ADRIAN STANLEY](#) ON THU, APR 25, 2013 AT 12:25 PM

Citizens Project hopes a provocative new ad campaign will turn heads.

Executive director Kristy Milligan says the new ads were modeled after the "before and after" clues on Wheel of Fortune. The idea was to put a focus on the transformation of Colorado Springs from the center of the "hate state" to a more progressive and accepting place to live.

"It was actually a little bit controversial, even with our board," Milligan says of the ads. "I think that it will be kind of provocative for many people, and kind of pull some strings for people, and we're prepared for that."

Some of the ads:



Tags: [Citizens Project](#), [Kristy Milligan](#), [ad](#), [gay](#), [hate state](#), [Image](#)

The City believes you can't handle

THE TRUTH

shall set you free.

At Citizens Project, we've been fighting for true American values—diversity, equality and separation of church and state—since 1992.

It's a fight we've chronicled in our new ad campaign, currently running with Lamar, Comcast and The Independent.

Unfortunately, you won't see these ads on our city's bus shelters, because the City rejected the campaign.

Evidently, they believe you're not mature enough to handle a positive, albeit thought-provoking, message like ours.

Sure, the ads may seem a bit puzzling at first, but that's okay. In trying to figure them out, you're also thinking about the issues raised. And that's the whole point.

No doubt, some of you will laugh and say political correctness has bit us in the posterior. That's okay, too. Our posteriors can handle it.

But we're betting the majority of you agree with us. Maybe not with our message, but certainly with our right to express it.

What do you think?

Visit us at citizensproject.org/thetruth and let us know.

Unlike the City, we won't censor you. And that's the truth.



We've been there. We'll be there. citizensproject.org

The City believes you can't handle **THE TRUTH** shall set you free.

At Citizens Project, we've been fighting for true American values—diversity, equality and separation of church and state—since 1992.

It's a fight we've chronicled in our new ad campaign, currently running with Lamar and The Independent.

Unfortunately, you won't see these ads on our city's bus shelters, because the City rejected the campaign.

Evidently, they believe you're not mature enough to handle a positive, albeit thought-provoking, message like ours.

Sure, the ads may seem a bit puzzling at first, but that's okay. In trying to figure them out, you're also thinking about the issues raised. And that's the whole point.

No doubt, some of you will laugh and say political correctness has bit us in the posterior. That's okay, too. Our posteriors can handle it.

But we're betting the majority of you agree with us. Maybe not with our message, but certainly with our right to express it.

What do you think?

Visit us at citizensproject.org/thetruth and let us know.

Unlike the City, we won't censor you. And that's the truth.



We've been there. We'll be there. citizensproject.org

These are the ads, in billboard form:



**Can you handle the truth? We can. Tell us what you think
below!**

or, Go to the full Citizens Project site »

Share this:

Email

Facebook 95

Twitter 16

Pinterest

Google +1

23 THOUGHTS ON "THE TRUTH"



Catherine

on May 29, 2013 at 6:06 am said:

I am a Christian who supports gay rights. The majority of my friends, Christian and not, support gay rights as well. I can appreciate what you are trying to do with these ads but I don't appreciate the over generalization of Colorado Springs. Perhaps the ads would be better served if they focused directly on gay rights and diversity as opposed to the generalization of certain opinions in Colorado Springs. Specifically the signs that start with 'Colorado Springs doesn't like/tolerate' ignores all the voices out there in Colorado Springs that DO support those things.



Realtor

on June 9, 2013 at 5:59 am said:

I agree with the idea that we should all get along and be respectful. As a Christian, I am responsible for my own actions and should try not to judge others as they will have to answer to someone much more important than me some day. However, I agree with Catherine that the only reason I could see you generalizing all of Colorado Springs would be for dramatizing effect. In order to be more accurate and honest, you should be more specific and leave out all of us that generally SUPPORT your cause as if we're part of the problem.



crystal castaneda

on May 29, 2013 at 8:03 am said:

Thanks for promoting Diversity and dialogue. I've felt alone a lot of times in my views and thoughts in Colorado Springs. Its nice to know there are others out there.



Bob

on **May 29, 2013 at 8:36 am** said:

I see nothing wrong with the signs, and think it's ridiculous that city transit won't allow the signs on buses, especially since they've allowed signs from religious groups (religious bias, anyone?). As a CP member from the very beginning, I am concerned that both city transits actions, and some of the billboards from CP continue to propagate the (mis)conception that Colorado Springs is a closed-minded town. While SOME religious groups with very big voices continue to promote their anti-diversity, anti-gay propaganda, I believe that by and large, the average citizen has more moderate, "live and let live" views. I'm not sure that CP is doing the city any favors with some of the billboards, and certainly think it could've gotten it's point across with less negativity.



George Zirfas

on **May 29, 2013 at 9:44 am** said:

You can't fight city hall??? Guess you can't fight the churches or the city council either. I like the campaign. We must fight for equality.



Kathy Crandall

on **May 29, 2013 at 9:53 am** said:

Yeah CP !!!

Give em hell. (or is that too controversial?)



Pete Ruch

on **May 29, 2013 at 10:24 am** said:

I do not think the message is clear. Pete

P.S. You might be interested in the book "How to be Secular", if you have not already read it.



Charles Hauser, MD

on **May 29, 2013 at 11:00 am** said:

Keep up the good work. A sign should make the reader work/think/examine the issues and his/her attitudes about those issues. We appreciate Citizens Project and have since its inception years ago when we lived in Colorado Springs. The city (and some of our T party friends) will always resist the diversity message of equality, including the diversity of thought!

C. Hauser, MD, Santa Fe



Samantha Bachechi

on **May 29, 2013 at 11:07 am** said:

Our little town needs to grow up! When will people wake up? When we who care about our environment and diversity be the MAJORITY!?



sharon berthrong

on **May 29, 2013 at 11:21 am** said:

Please, please, please keep up the fight. These people are after our "souls" should we happen to have one.

You are in the right though. Thanks for your persistence, guts and brains.

sharon b



Susanna Parkhouse

on **May 29, 2013 at 12:01 pm** said:

It has always been clear to me that there should be separation of church and state. I wonder how that simple concept gets so twisted. Also, all people are created equal and how that concept gets so twisted also baffles me. Keep going, Citizens Project. It's a tough fight in Colorado Springs and El Paso county.



Fred Kormos

on **May 29, 2013 at 12:10 pm** said:

Your billboards are wonderful!

The easy thing to do would be to simply ignore the (often unconscionable) things that go on in our community. Citizens Project should be congratulated for taking a stand and making people think about these things. Nothing will ever change if people don't stop and think.

Bravo, and keep up the good work!

**Robert E Powell**

on May 29, 2013 at 12:18 pm said:

That the city won't allow ads on bus shelters is disturbing. Since when does the city have the right to endorse or oppose political ads? Perhaps having a so-called "strong mayor" has been a step toward fascist dictatorship.

**Barb Van Hoy**

on May 29, 2013 at 3:37 pm said:

Wow, those are AWESOME! What Sharon said. 😊

**Musick**

on May 29, 2013 at 5:09 pm said:

I dig the purposeful dichotomy with socially-loud words hinging them together. So thought provoking. Any confusion is a means to thoughtfulness.

**Cathy Kleinsmith**

on May 29, 2013 at 6:47 pm said:

I keep plotting my escape from this city that is living in the 1950s—or earlier. Found a story in The Gazette about fewer people moving to El Paso County very interesting. Maybe the truth about Colo Spgs is finally having an impact. Keep up the great work!



M.L.

on **May 30, 2013 at 12:56 pm** said:

I'm not giving my full name because my son and daughter may not want everyone to know who we are. I must first commend you on your efforts to promote diversity in Colorado Springs. You are doing wonderful and important work! I will, however, let you know what happened recently after my kids saw one of these billboards (the middle one, above). They were at first very disturbed by them. Since we were just driving by, they didn't really have time to digest what they were seeing. Their initial thought was that the sign was derogatory. After we passed by again and I was able to see the sign (I hadn't the first time through), I explained what CP was trying to accomplish. They were happy with the aim, but thought the execution could use some work. The younger set isn't exactly familiar with Wheel of Fortune references! 😊 Being a trans person and a bisexual person (respectively), they are frequently exposed to negativity, and are pretty sensitive to it. Living in Colorado Springs, they sort of expect anything in a public space to be against people like them (imagine that!), so I think you can see how this came about. I don't think the signs are bad, per se, but thought you might consider the effect they could have on younger people who might see them when nobody is around to explain the intent. They're pretty smart kids generally, but as I said, something like this tends to hit them in the hind brain, so to speak, where the thinking processes don't take place. Just a bit of food for thought. 😊



Lucky Stoller

on **May 30, 2013 at 3:52 pm** said:

The First Amendment of our beloved Constitution guarantees all of us freedom of expression—the right to express our views and the right to hear the views of others expressed. It also guarantees us both freedom OF religion and freedom FROM religion. And that's the truth. I think we all can handle the truth.



John R. Marshall

on **May 30, 2013 at 3:53 pm** said:

You folks are so right on the money. I was raised in this area, joined the Navy in 1956, and was essentially gone until the of 1994. I was in Mass. when that anti-gay legislation was passed, and Colorado was the laughing stock of the entire nation. What I've never understood are all these supposed Christians who are homophobic. I think they're hypocrites. Please keep up the good work.



Pat Hill

on **May 30, 2013 at 7:09 pm** said:

Love them! Please put them Everywhere!!!!!!



Kristy Milligan

on **June 6, 2013 at 9:16 pm** said:

Thanks for the great feedback, everyone! Keep it coming!!



kristy

on **June 6, 2013 at 9:23 pm** said:

Great feedback! Thanks, everyone! Keep it coming!



Carol

on June 10, 2013 at 12:51 pm said:

Love all the signs...but what I don't understand is Christians say we are "made in the image of god" so doesn't that mean god is gay too? Just saying! Born and raised an Atheist, happy to see separation of church and state still matters. Thanks and keep up the good work!

3

Text

Paper

TRANSIT: 'NO' TO BUS SHELTER ADS

OFFICIALS: PEOPLE MIGHT FIND SIGNS TOO OFFENSIVE

BY DAVE PHILIPPS

dave.philipps@gazette.com

Colorado Springs' transit system is refusing to run ads by the group Citizens Project that attempt to promote dialogue on contentious issues, saying the signs are too controversial.

This spring, Citizens Project submitted a series of ads to appear on regional bus shelters.

The ads suggest that on such issues gay rights, separation of church and state, and prayer in schools, multiple viewpoints should be heard in a city known as a Republican stronghold.

"We were trying to foster an opportunity to have conversations and create bridges of understanding in our community," said Kristy Milligan, executive director of the 20-year-old nonprofit.

Citizens Project has been running similar ads with such phrases as "Create conformity" and "Freedom from expression" with the transit department for years.

While previous ads appeared on buses all over the city, the new ads got axed by Mountain Metropolitan Transit.

"They said people might find them offensive," Milligan said. "We don't agree. We believe consumers are smart and they will pause, be thoughtful, and engage in conversation about where we are as a community, where we are going and how we get there."

Transit division manager Craig Blewitt said the ads are too controversial, said Vicki McCann, spokeswoman for Mountain Metropolitan Transit.

She pointed to the transit agency's guidelines that prohibit "immoral, vulgar, disreputable or other advertisements which may be offensive to the public" and any ad which appears to support a particular "service, idea, political or religious point of view."

"It's our intention to be as fair and equitable as we can while at the same time keeping in mind the public," McCann said. "We want to be sure everyone is comfortable with what we put up."

Milligan, and Citizens Project is being singled out and that the guidelines are not being applied equally.

"Over the course of time, we've seen pro-life messaging, overtly religious messages, a lot of messaging that advances a political agenda," she said.

In 2004, the Colorado Springs-based nonprofit group prolifeRealEstate.com ran pro-life bus bench ads.

In 2010, a local bus bench featured an ad referencing Armageddon that read "Save the Date! Return of Christ: May 21, 2011."

In 2011, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ran bus bench ads proclaiming, "I'm a Mormon."

"You just have to laugh at it," Milligan said. "We are not going to make a big deal of it."

But the move did inspire a new Citizens Project ad that starts running Wednesday in the Colorado Springs Independent. It reads, "The City believes you can't handle THE TRUTH shall set you free."

The Constitution
never mentions
Separation of Church and State
is what makes
our country great.

The school day
should start with
PRAYER
has no place
in public school.

[Open the Newspaper](#)

Colorado Springs transit system refuses bus shelter ads from Citizens Project

By Dave Philipps Published: May 28, 2013 | 5:20 pm • 8

- 218

- 4

- email

Colorado Springs' transit system is refusing to run ads by the group Citizens Project that attempt to promote dialogue on contentious issues, saying the signs are too controversial.

This spring, Citizens Project submitted a series of ads to appear on regional bus shelters.

The ads suggest that on such issues gay rights, separation of church and state, and prayer in schools, multiple viewpoints should be heard in a city known as a Republican stronghold.

"We were trying to foster an opportunity to have conversations and create bridges of understanding in our community," said Kristy Milligan, executive director of the 20-year-old nonprofit.

Citizens Project has been running similar ads with such phrases as "Create conformity" and "Freedom from expression" with the transit department for years.

While previous ads appeared on buses all over the city, the new ads got axed by Mountain Metropolitan Transit.

"They said people might find them offensive," Milligan said. "We don't agree. We believe consumers are smart and they will pause, be thoughtful, and engage in conversation about where we are as a community, where we are going and how we get there."

Transit division manager Craig Blewitt said the ads are too controversial, said Vicki McCann, spokeswoman for Mountain Metropolitan Transit.

She pointed to the transit agency's guidelines that prohibit "Immoral, vulgar, disreputable or other advertisements which may be offensive to the public" and any ad which appears to support a particular "service, idea, political or religious point of view."

"It's our intention to be as fair and equitable as we can while at the same time keeping in mind the public," McCann said. "We want to be sure everyone is comfortable with what we put up."

Milligan, and Citizens Project is being singled out and that the guidelines are not being applied equally.

"Over the course of time, we've seen pro-life messaging, overtly religious messages, a lot of messaging that advances a political agenda," she said.

In 2004, the Colorado Springs-based nonprofit group prolifeRealEstate.com ran pro-life bus bench ads.

In 2010, a local bus bench featured an ad referencing Armageddon that read "Save the Date! Return of Christ: May 21, 2011."

In 2011, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ran bus bench ads proclaiming, "I'm a Mormon."

"You just have to laugh at it," Milligan said. "We are not going to make a big deal of it."

But the move did inspire a new Citizens Project ad that starts running Wednesday in the Colorado Springs Independent. It reads, "The City believes you can't handle THE TRUTH shall set you free."

Contact Dave Philipps

636-0238

- 218

- 4

- email

- Citizens Project is just another anti-christian group.... their ad's are not to create a dialogue on contentious issues but to attack the Christian Faith.

Reply · 6 ·

Like

· May 28 at 8:06pm



Submit

Bryan Kochis · Top Commenter · UC Davis

There you go with the persecution complex again. It just so happens that many Christians support Citizen Project's work.

Reply · 14 ·

Like

· May 28 at 9:46pm



Submit

Richard D. Wehner · Top Commenter

Roy: The world is not composed of only christians.

Reply · 11 ·

Like

· May 29 at 7:31am



Submit

Joy Nunez Garscadden · Top Commenter

Yikes with the persecution! It is a shame I don't have a black helicopter to fly around, just to freak you out. Seriously, CP is one of the few organizations left that actually tries to get both sides of every argument to talk to each other. I guess if the only thing you know how to say is, "You're here to take my (choose one):guns/bible/liberty/cabbages!" then it's not much of a conversation.

Reply · 8 ·

Like

May 29 at 8:43am

View more



Submit

Bryan Kochis · Top Commenter · UC Davis

I love Citizens Project, but I reviewed the ads on their website, and I can see why they were turned down.

Reply · 5 ·

Like

May 28 at 5:39pm



Submit

Douglas Hitchens · Top Commenter · Warp Core containment Specialist at Unnamed

They don't seem particularly well thought out, or terribly convincing.

Reply · 1 ·

Like

· May 29 at 7:09am



Submit

Crystal Dojcek · Top Commenter

they say they want everyone to be comfortable with their ads? give me a holy break! I have seen many ads that I did not agree with, but, I just laughed it off and went about my life. of all things, the bus bench they are worried about! I guess being fair and promoting equality is pretty offensive for some in this town. and by the way, there are many "religious" folks who support citizens project! who needs the bus stop anyway for ads.

Reply · 4 ·

Like

· May 29 at 11:24am



Submit

Amber W. Cote · Director of Success By 6 at Pikes Peak United Way

sassy

Reply · 2 ·

Like

· May 29 at 11:25am



Submit

Diann Webb

And "they" wonder why people don't want to move their businesses and jobs here. A city that is known for their diversity and equality will be the winner.

Reply · 5 ·

Like

· May 29 at 11:31am



Submit

Neil Fenton · Works at Meininger Art Supply

have you seen YOUR savior's name on a dirty bus bench today?

Reply · 2 ·

Like

· May 29 at 12:08pm

View 4 more



Submit

Jeanne Kleinman Williams · Speech Language Pathologist at Colorado Springs School District 11

The citizens of Colorado Springs are supported by Citizens Project, hence the word "citizen". Sadly, some of our citizens forget that those groups who are not as large in number in our city have an agency that looks beyond "tolerance" and sees equality and acceptance for each person's uniqueness.

Reply · 4 ·

Like

· May 29 at 3:22am



Submit

Don Lloyd · Top Commenter · Pikes Peak Community College

They also see the constant harangue of the communist socialist progressives and their agendas, and it is finally making people angry, and they are saying no. That will push most liberals right over the edge. Fall to the floor, and roll around kicking your feet and screaming ...

Reply · 1 ·

Like

· May 29 at 2:54pm



Submit

Marcus Agfa · Top Commenter · Westview High School

free speech is a basic human right that is protected by the federal goverment. If ad's for other group's is on there they should allow others.

Reply · 4 ·

Like

· May 29 at 11:02am



Submit

Kenny Powell · Top Commenter · Kathleen Senior High School

Again Marcus, these ads TARGET a specific group of people for their faith. Not only is this pathetic, it is disturbing to most. Free speech SHOULD be silenced if it specifically TARGETS people just to be nasty like these idiots are doing.

Reply · 1 ·

Like

· May 29 at 3:05pm



Submit

Kenny Powell · Top Commenter · Kathleen Senior High School

Good for Colorado Springs Transit! No one should be forced to be subjected to things most people see as wrong or unacceptable and offensive. Citizens Project is known for being disgusting in their attacks on everything good and right.

Reply · 2 ·

Like

· May 29 at 2:55pm



Submit

Cathey Smith Barbee

Yes, those terrible things like diversity, equality, and inclusion. Awful stuff.

Reply · 4 ·

Like

· May 29 at 3:49pm



Submit

Sidney Patin · Top Commenter · Works at Sidney L. Patin, P.C. - Attorney at Law

Agree with Kenny. If the so-called Citizens Project wants to spout their offensive trash, let them do it someplace where it won't offend other people.

Reply ·

Like

· May 29 at 8:19pm



Submit

James Spradlin

What is offensive about encouraging open communication on issues? What is good and right to you is offensive to others. If someone points that out to you it is an attack. But why? Is your faith not strong enough to be challenged? Do you think that listening to a different point of view could make you falter? Have strength in God and listen to others so that you may be able to understand and teach, is that not what the scripture says? Sticking your head in the sand is not what he would have wanted.

BTW many Christians belong to the Citizens Project.

Reply · 1 ·

Like

· May 30 at 8:49am



Submit

Michael Lowery · Top Commenter

The Independent is the perfect place for those kinds of ads, really. As hard as it is to believe, CS is still a very conservative town, although it is in the state of Mexirado, many of us still speak English and would rather not be slapped in the face by progressives.

Reply · 2 ·

Like

· May 29 at 2:30am



Submit

Greg Varner

Why would you think it's OK to censor a first amendment right to free speech because you don't like the content? The constitution protects everyone, including those in a minority, from those in a majority who might be out of control and trample rights.

Reply · 4 ·

Like

· May 29 at 11:08am



[Submit](#)

Marcus Agfa · Top Commenter · Westview High School

Thats right Greg. Consirvative's only beleive in free speach if it is something they like a ad for gun's or a churcj

Reply · 2 ·

[Like](#)

· May 29 at 12:37pm



[Submit](#)

Kenny Powell · Top Commenter · Kathleen Senior High School

Greg Varner if you cannot figure out that these ads are specifically targeting Christians and the Christian faith, then you are completely clueless. So-called free speech should be stopped when they attack others especially a whole faith group. It is petty and pathetic, and very few people would like and agree with these morons.

Reply · 1 ·

[Like](#)

· May 29 at 3:01pm

[View 6 more](#)



[Submit](#)

William Halstead · Top Commenter · Ocean Seminary College

Citizen's Project is too controversial, but churches spreading divisive, hate-filled messages are okay? I had to laugh today; I was riding a bus and it had an ad for the church that told me that G-d hates gays more than He does child molesters. That's okay, but promoting dialogue is bad, right?

http://gazette.com/colorado-springs-transit-system-refuses-bus-shelter-ads-from-citizens-project/article/1501317?custom_click=rss

Reply · 1 ·

Like

· May 30 at 11:21am

Facebook social plugin

